

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 5, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you not to resume nuclear weapons testing. The United States must continue its world leadership role in the arena of nuclear nonproliferation. If the U.S. resumes testing, it will send the message to the rest of the world that testing nuclear weapons is acceptable. Not only is the resumption of nuclear testing unacceptable from a nonproliferation perspective, it is also unnecessary, since experts in your administration and at the National Academy of Sciences have reported that further testing is not required to assure the safety and reliability of the nuclear weapons stockpile.

On October 21, Edward Aldridge, Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, sent a letter to the Nuclear Weapons Council that seems to recommend a resumption of testing. In this letter he says, "It would ... be desirable to assess the potential benefits ... from a return to nuclear testing," and requests that the nuclear weapons laboratories "readdress the value of a low yield testing program."

The United States last tested a nuclear device on September 23, 1992. Less than a month later, on October 2, 1992, the Hatfield-Exon amendment to the Energy and Water Appropriations Act of 1993 imposed a testing moratorium until January 1, 1997. Since then, while not legally constrained to do so, it has been the policy of the United States to continue that moratorium, following the July 3, 1993 moratorium extension by President Clinton. The Department of Energy has spent over \$50 billion since 1991 to develop and use science-based methods of stockpile certification, including sophisticated computer simulations of nuclear explosions, careful monitoring of the existing stockpile, and basic research to study the ageing process, that have precluded the need for further testing. A July 2002 study from the National Academy of Sciences on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty¹ reviewed the scientific and technical issues associated with the stockpile, and concluded that "the United States has the technical capabilities to maintain confidence in the safety and reliability of its existing nuclear-weapon stockpile under the CTBT." The study also stated that "age-related defects in the affecting stockpile reliability may occur ... [but] nuclear testing is not needed to discover these problems and is not likely to be needed to address them."

¹ Technical Issues related to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, The National Academy of Sciences, 2002.

Mr. Aldridge's opinion regarding the resumption of nuclear testing also directly contradicts statements made by officials charged with the responsibility for assuring the safety and reliability of our nuclear weapons stockpile. Bruce Godwin, Associate Director for Defense and Nuclear Technologies at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory², and Bryan Wilkes, spokesman for the Department of Energy³, see neither a need for nuclear testing to maintain the stockpile nor a need for movement towards a resumption of testing.

The United States signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996. While the Senate so far has failed to ratify that treaty, the U.S. has followed a *de facto* policy of not testing nuclear explosives. Most of the world has now signed and ratified the CTBT, and China is the only other nuclear weapons state not to have done so. Resumption of testing by the United States would undermine, perhaps fatally, the CTBT regime and signal U.S. disregard for this vital treaty, with unpredictable proliferation consequences around the world. Resumption of U.S. nuclear testing would likely be followed by Russian testing, then Chinese testing, and eventually Indian and Pakistani testing. This chain of events would set in motion another nuclear arms race, reversing the progress in nuclear disarmament by a decade. Instead of considering a resumption of nuclear explosive testing, your Administration should be pushing for ratification of the CTBT to provide for the safety and security of all Americans.

At a time when we are contemplating war with Iraq to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, when we are struggling with North Korea's announcement of its nuclear weapons program, when we are deeply concerned about the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan, a resumption of nuclear explosive testing by the United States would be a reversal of U.S. policy and counter to our nonproliferation goals. We seek your clear and unambiguous assurance that the United States will not resume testing nuclear explosives of any size.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey Ellen O. Tauscher Jim McDermott

Edward J. Markey

Ellen O. Tauscher

Jim McDermott

Sheila Jackson-Lee

Sheila Jackson-Lee

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett

Shelley Berkley

Shelley Berkley

Eleanor Holmes Norton

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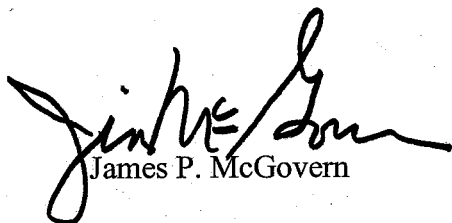
Joseph Crowley Zoe Lofgren

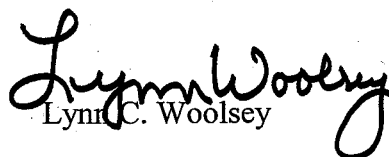
Joseph Crowley

Zoe Lofgren

² San Jose Mercury News, "U.S. Ponders Resumption of Nuclear Weapons Tests," November 16, 2002.

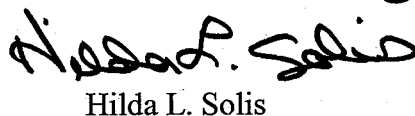
³ Arms Control Association, "Pentagon Memo Raises Possibility of Nuclear Testing," December 2002.

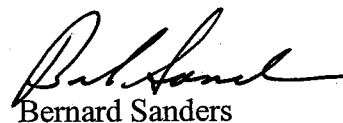

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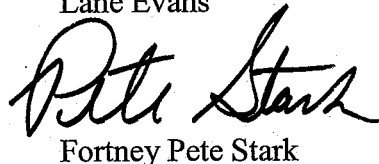

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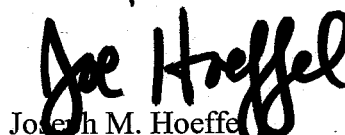

Bernard Sanders


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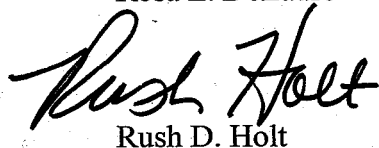

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Barbara Lee

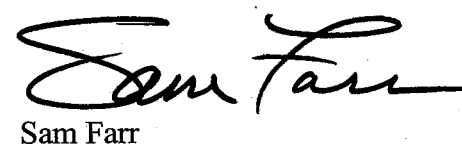

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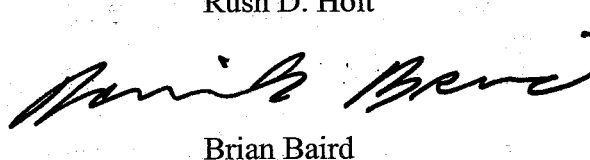

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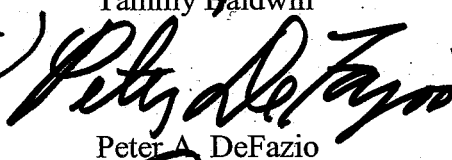

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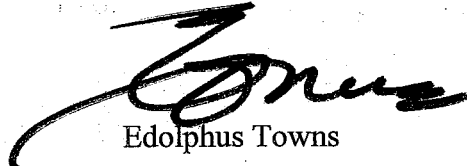

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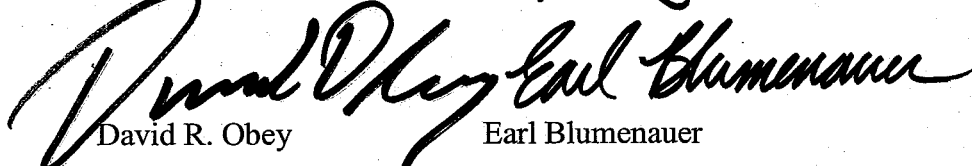

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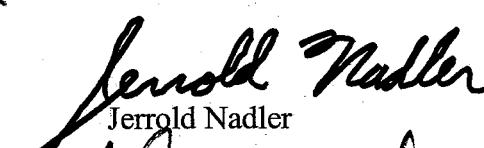

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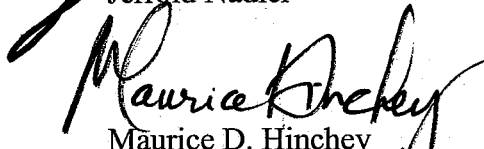

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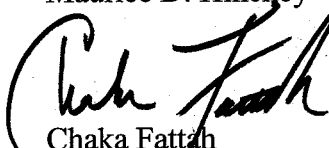

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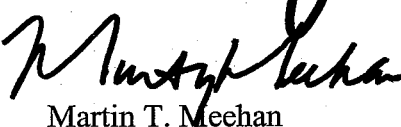

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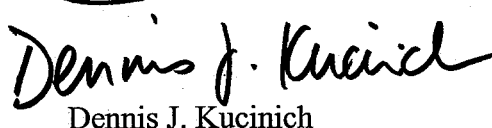

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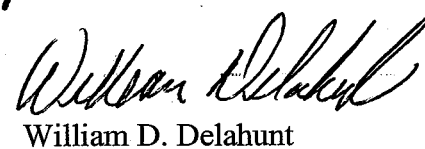

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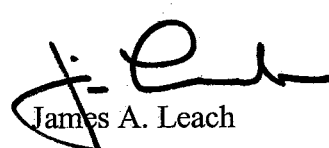

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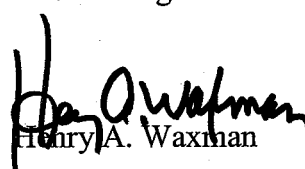

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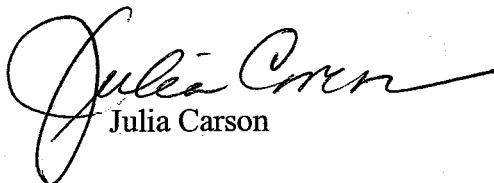
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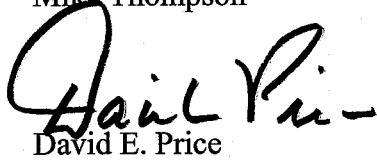
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Mark Udall

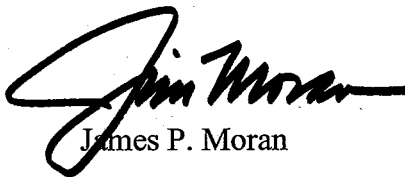
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